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The chromosome count for Hibiscus syriacus is reported to be 80 and 90 in different genus sections. For Hibiscus rosa-sinensis, the count for this genetically complex grouping is 46-144. If you are interested in further technical details on this subject, you might order Bulletin Number One and Bulletin Number Two from the Publications page in the back of this Seed Pod.

Preparing a Visual Feast

In response to the Spring, 2005 Seed Pod column, Ms. Lila Mulholland, Tampa resident and longtime member of Sunset Chapter, thoughtfully wrote to me and Bob Rivers-Smith of New Zealand about her specialty of preparing hibiscus arrangements. Here are some excerpts from Lila's notes.

"Greetings from Tampa, Florida USA... Enclosed you will find a copy of a (Society) Convention program that I did a couple of years ago. I am happy to share what I know about arranging hibiscus. Hopefully, there is a bit of information that you will find useful.

P.S. Some other fun arrangements that I have made were in a bird bath, and an eight foot bamboo raft to float in a swimming pool (duct tape, fishing line, and plastic were required). I am also enclosing a picture of another arrangement to float in a swimming pool or place on a long picnic table. It consists of four palm bloom shields joined together by short cross pieces. This one when finished should look like a catamaran sail boat, sail optional."

And in another note to Sam,
"I am enclosing several other pictures to show that to exhibit hibiscus one is not limited to just a bowl. It would be nice to encourage folks at the show to be creative with hibiscus. This would demonstrate to the public that these beauties can be more than a one day flower."

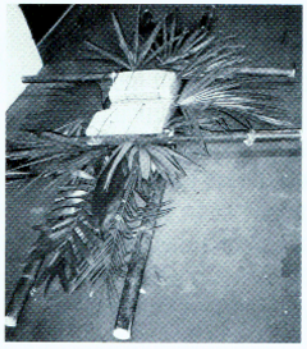

Figure 3 — Bamboo Floating Frame ready for decoration. Note Styrofoam pieces ready for wires holding blooms.

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Figure 4 — Decorated and floating in pool – Party Time!

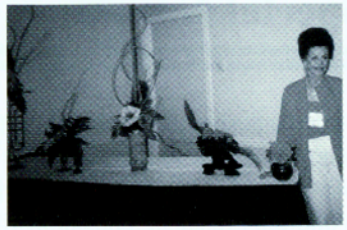

Figure 5 — Lila with five different hibiscus arrangements.

Odds & Ends... A Thought to Ponder

Rules are necessary for people to organize themselves for a common purpose. They can change as members' individual perspectives change, in response to shifts in the "operating environment," as the group's objectives change, as needed to "repeat the lesson," or periodically to change things "for change's sake" (e.g., teenagers).

There is nothing inherently wrong with any particular set of rules as long as
There is mutual agreement.
They serve the purpose of establishing order.
They accomplish the desired result.

To be effective, group standards must be simple and widely communicated. Healthy rules create a social compact to allow civil discourse and competition. A single individual or a small controlling group can not emotionally "own" or enforce rules on a larger body. Rules only work when they are thoroughly understood, clearly communicated, and majority-supported... no matter how right or... wrong they may be. Sometimes leadership is firmly, but gently, guiding a group toward understanding and accepting that new or revised rules are necessary to fit changing realities and shifting goals.

A Final Word

My snail mail address is P. O. Box 2094, Fairhope, AL 36533, and my Hibiscus e-mail address is <HibiscusFiend@mschi.com>. It is lonesome growing hibiscus – without a net, but less so, thanks to everyone who shares themselves with other hibiscus folk around the world.

Sam